



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(HELENA) --- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS TO 4.0%

(HELENA) --- As the national unemployment rate continues to rise, Montana's unemployment rate decreased for the second month in a row. The state seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell slightly by 0.1% in July to 4.0%. The national unemployment rate increased from 5.5% to 5.7% for July.

"Montana's unemployment rate has now decreased for the second month in the row," says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "Although this decrease appears small, it translates into approximately 6,300 more jobs added to Montana's economy. This is further proof that Montana's economy continues to stay the course while the national economy struggles."

The total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, increased by 501 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis, which translates into an increase of 6,302 jobs on an unadjusted basis. Seasonally adjusted non-farm payroll employment increased by 300 jobs over the month.

Growth in the seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) slowed for the month of July, increasing by 0.8 percent compared to the June increase of 1.1 percent. Price increases were again driven by energy costs, which increased by 4.0 percent in July. Food costs increased 0.9 percent over the month. The price levels for all items less food and energy, also called core inflation, rose 0.3 percent for the second straight month.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.7 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The August 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, September 19, 2008.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121